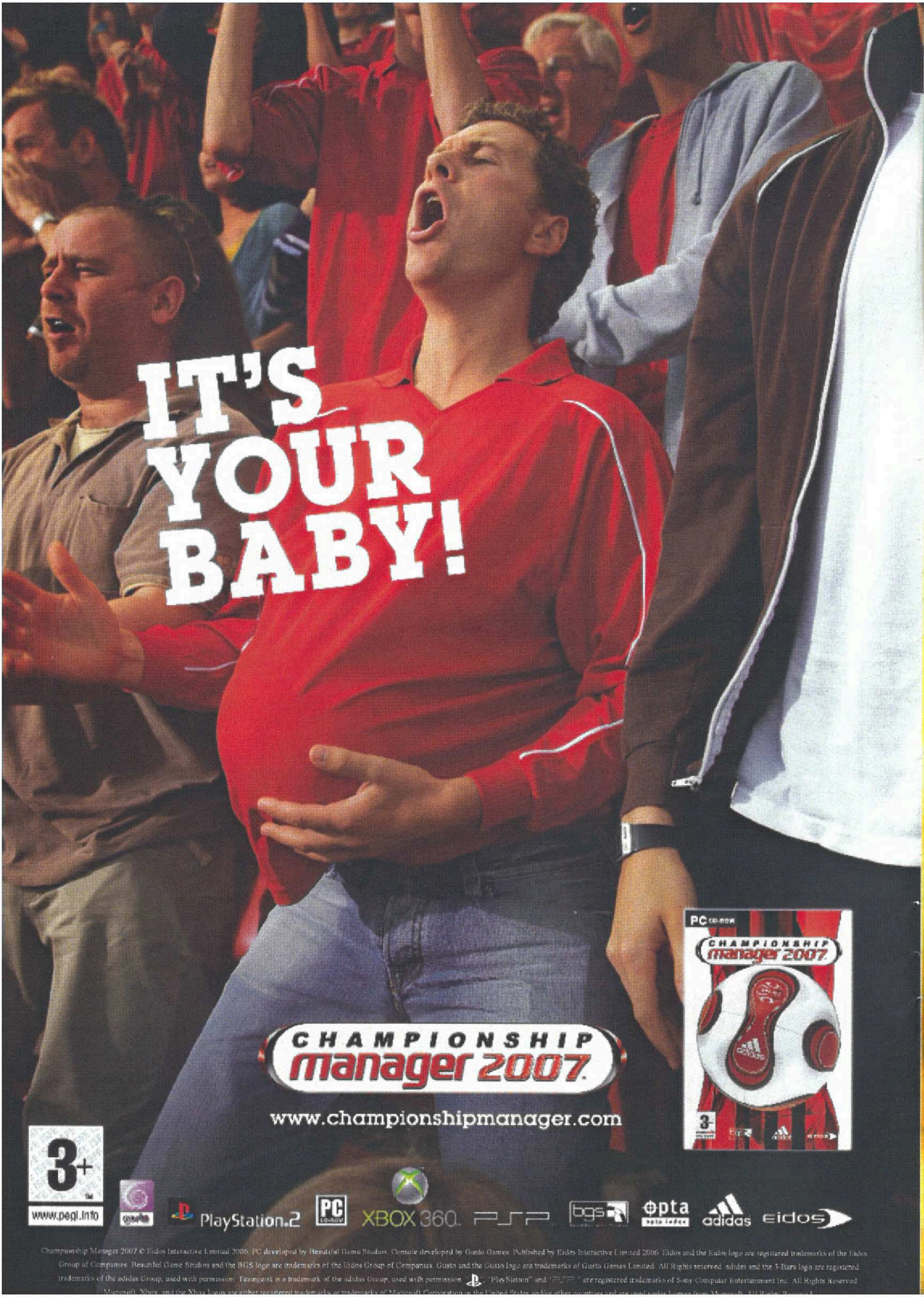
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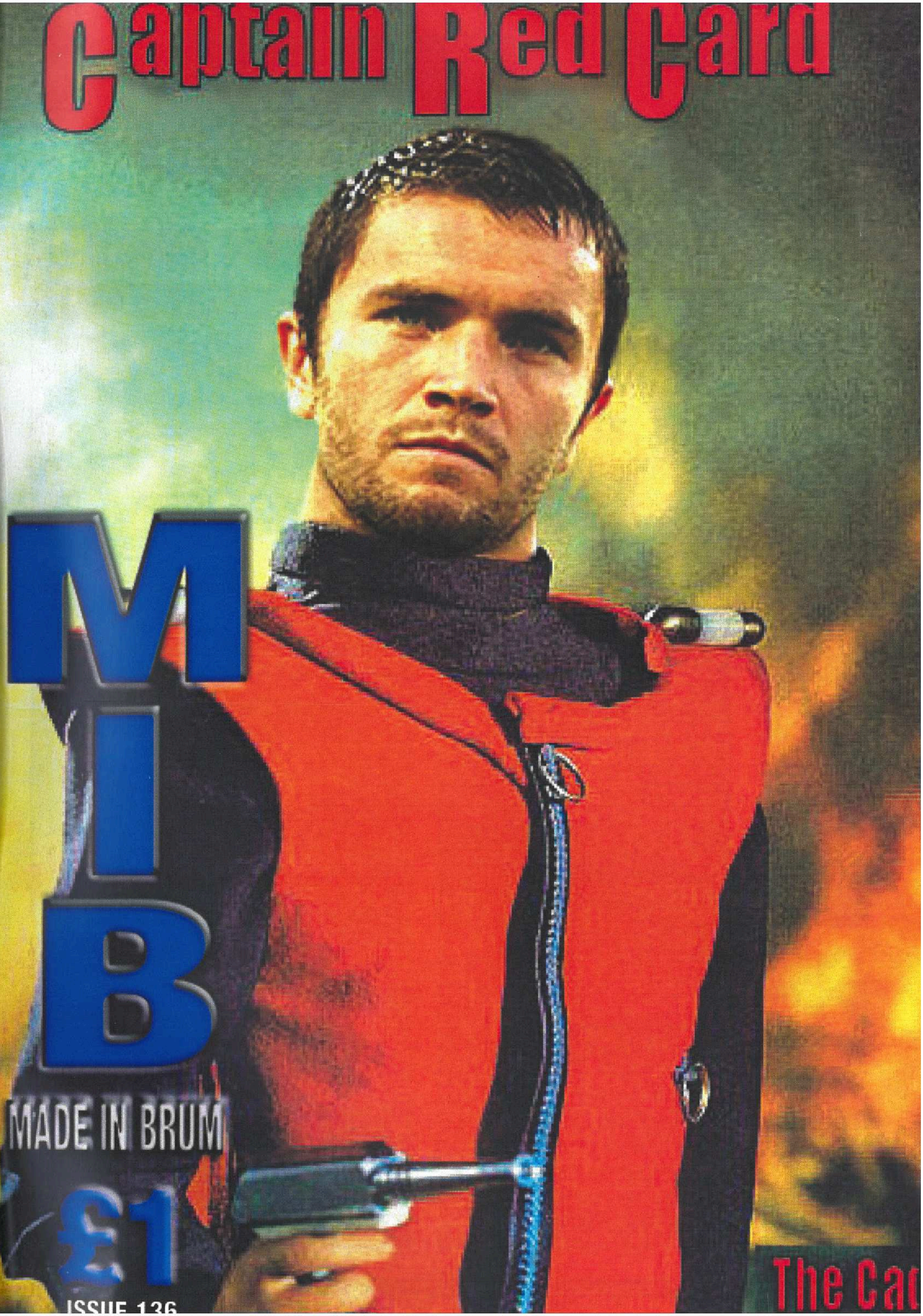

MIB
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ISSUE 136

The Ca

MIB

MADE IN BRUM - MATCHDAY FANZINE

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Issue 136 - Season 2006/07

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MIB is an independent publication, bought to you by Blues supporters for Blues supporters. MIB is a platform for the views of all Birmingham City supporters.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions are always welcome.

If you have something to say, or something to get off your chest, please write in, or email. This is your fanzine.

MIB is always after regular contributions from Bluenoses

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MATCH REPORTS
BY RON SINGING THE BLUES

TALKING BLUE

It really has been a strange start to our Championship season, we've had the results but without the performances. They do say, that it's the winning that counts, and to a point that is true. But, most Bluenoses must be wondering what is wrong with our team, which verges on the sublime through to, although only in glimpses, the horrendous. Let's just look at our last game up at Leeds. The Bluenoses at Elland Road were equally split in their view of how we played. There is no denying the game was exciting, especially to the impartial supporter. In fact, when going forward we do look a threat but the problems start as soon as we lose the ball. The whole team then look totally disjointed and the panic then sets in. To put it in a nutshell, we are all over the place. Now I know we Noses were crying out for attacking football, and to a certain extent we are getting it, but at what cost?

We are now nine games into the season, and in how many of those games have we dominated a match? Not one. We have used three or four get out of jail cards, and had some very good luck. Teams that we have played have all been organised and played to a set plan, yet we never seem to have a plan. Why? Where is it going wrong? Most would agree that we have got some very special players who, as individuals are good, but as a team they are in total disarray.

Then of course we come to our disciplinary record, which is disgraceful, with four being sent off already. Now I'm not a Jonty hater. In fact, I think he does a very good job for the team, especially with his battling qualities. I would play him as full back but not in midfield, and with him being captain, Brucie will always pick him, and I don't agree with that. I stuck up for him after his captain's armband and shirt throwing incident, but sometimes he is a bit of a liability. Now is probably the right time to give the captaincy to someone else; perhaps Dunny? It will help Jonty and the team. Will Bruce be brave enough? I doubt it very much.

Today's game will be a turning point in our season, it's the first of many local derbies and more importantly a must win game for us, to stay on the shirt tails of surprise leaders, Cardiff. And, it is also important for Bruce. It's the ten game mark, the point in the season where the board will look and say "do we stay with who we know, or change it" it's a hard one. Personally, I think Bruce should go and I've thought that since Man Citeee away last season, when he picked Heskey on the bench and in fact he was 90 miles away watching his fourth child being born. But, if the board does stay with him, I will grudgingly give him my support. I dare say he will get us promoted at a pinch. With the players in our squad, we should really walk this league. That's not being arrogant. Just ask other supporters who they think should go up? Nine out of ten will plump for us.

Leicester are a very inconsistent team, sometimes they are good, sometimes they are crap, so lets hope the crap one turns up today. We need to get the three points, and to keep our season going. We need to go into the International break with three points and job done. I think we will win, but I am not sure about the performance. Will we at last dominate and take apart a visiting team? I doubt it very much.

During the last game played at Stan's, the atmosphere got back to what it should be, and the support given by the 1700 Noses who went to Leeds was tremendous. Let's hope it carries on today.
That's it from me, so Keep The Faith, Keep Right On and Have A Good Un.

Big Dave Thomas

CHANGES

I thought I would write to you about the change at St Andrews.

I always told everyone who would listen that this was the best fan base in the world. Spending year after year trying to get into the best league in the world the support was fantastic. Standing on the Kop, the banter and the furious support was second to none week after week, no matter what division we were in and it was a thrill to come up from Bristol and follow the team I loved.

Then it happened on that great day out in Cardiff. Afterwards, I was sitting with all my mates in a bar talking about our new life in the Premier League. Yes, we have arrived at last, and we talked about what would it be like, who would we buy, but the main topic became St. Andrew's. Our minds went back to the night we beat Ipswich in the semi final of the Worthington cup and the atmosphere in the ground that night proved that an all seater stadium, could be just as loud as the chants standing on the terraces in the old days. Wow, the Premier League sell- out crowds and the sheer noise that the Blues fans would make, meant I could not wait for our first Premier League game at home to arrive.
That first season was great and everybody got behind the team and we let the Premier League knew we had arrived. Well, four years on from then, what has happened? Did the Premier League destroy us and did our expectancy level rise so high that now we feel we are not given what we should have been? Or is it that a new type of supporter has arrived who is not content anymore with following the team through thick and thin? Now they see a Blues home game as the chance to boo and moan at anything they regard as less than what is expected for them.

So where have the fans gone from yesteryear that stood and chanted Keep Right On when we were 3-0 down at home? I have noticed the atmosphere getting worse year by year at the Blues, and now this season it's reaching an all time low. Yes, we have a relegation hangover but these players did not take us down. This is a new team giving everything to take us back up. We need to show them what we are really about. Let's get behind them and bring back the noise and intimidating level of support that was always our trademark. By us showing the players that we are behind them, it could just be the extra spur that takes them, and us to the Premier League again.

Keep Right On and SOTV!

Phil the Bristol Blue

CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEWS

BY Block5Babe

What happened to those little blue salt sachets anyway?

(Ready Salted Foxes Preview by Block5Babe)

Who's that one in the middle Dad..?

I suppose it comes as no surprise surprise to see Our Cilla is still on the books. And let's not forget we must always be grateful to the Foxes for letting us have two of their finest players of yesteryear, oh sorry and Emily too of course. Muzzy was a class act when he wasn't pretending to be a goalie. Robbie was, well, Robbie, nuff said, and still by far the best bit of incoming transfer business we have done in recent years. Having said that, Sheffchenko is shaping up rather well, don't you think?

Call Me Mr...

Tired of sitting on his mother's doorstep, Mr Kelly did a very creditable job of saving the Crisp Bowl Dwellers from the drop last season. Whether or not we should be glad that MON escaped there ages ago to go on to bigger and better (?) things remains to be seen. Interesting rumour on the Beeb that Arry's ex-pal Mandarin is considering throwing his obscenely large wealth in the direction of the Foxes: what I want to know is, can you now do some sort of search on't t'internet to find stinking rich foreigners, every bugger and his dog seem to be jumping on the bandwagon.

Removes 99% of Scum...

Well, what we actually need to do is to sidle up to our visitors today and cross their palms with silver to persuade them to remove the Scum of the Earth from the Milk Tray Cup. Unfortunately for the Foxes, the Twelve Toes are almost twinkling at present. It's just not cricket is it? [Ed: of course it isn't you dozy mare, it's bloody football!] Apparently there is good news on the injury front as Delaney's donkey has finally had the stone removed from his hoof.

Guess the gate

Being billed on Pravda, as I write, as the East/West derby, this has all the allure for most of us of a bowl of congealed rice pudding. The true test of the absence of our prawnie friends will be when the Baggies come to town, but nonetheless, I would be disappointed to see less than 22,000 for this one. The Board of Directors is now only thanking us for our support (not magnificent anymore it would seem). Well, it cuts both ways, guys and gals, we don't feel much like thanking you for your magnificent Grade A Fixture prices either.

Been there, done that....

Back in the pre-war years, when 4737 Carling used to be a Zulu you know, we actually tonked them 7-3. They have the upper hand slightly when you look at all fixtures over the years. On the last occasion they came to visit us, I was entertaining a client (before you go off and start scurrilous rumours, I'm a lawyer, not a lady of the night!) who caused great consternation at Le Hoss Noir by suggesting that someone should actually order a less than manly grapefruit juice and lemonade for him. Admittedly after half an hour in the company of sed Carling and Monsieur Le Clown, he had surrendered to alcohol, but then again, those two always look far better when you've got your beer goggles on, don't you think?

And the lucky winner is...?

They are languishing near the foot of the table, whilst we are riding high making the 10-man game an art form: Mystic Babe muttered ages ago that this might be our banana skin. Everyone is saying that sooner or later, we are going to give someone a right thrashing at home, but we pessimists think it might be the other way round. Remember that you are talking here to the expert who predicted a 0-0 bore at Leeds, but I still have a nasty feeling in my waters (the tablets will probably work in a day or so): **1-2**

Bring me sunshine..

(Nah, Luton Airport Preview by Block5Babe)

Who's that one in the middle Dad..?

My predecessor, young (it says that here on the tin, far be it from me to argue) Aylward used to do a section in his previews called I'm A Celebo, and I 'm gonna cheat completely and grab the opportunity here instead of taking the piss unmercifully out of the Luton squad to wax lyrical and all that over IMO one of the greatest comedians of my life-time. Yes, the late great and still incredibly sorely lamented Eric Morecambe (the one without the short fat hairy legs) was a Hatters fan. Forget the terminally unfunny Gervais and all the other modern day shite that masquerades as comedy, Eric and Ernie were the mutt's nuts!

Call Me Mr...

I've never quite understood why he is the first person to open his mouth on the subject, but a warm welcome to these hallowed pages for Mike Get That Bung Away From Me Newell. Credit to him for speaking out. It will be interesting to see the final outcome of the investigations. There's usually no smoke without fire, except when I'm cooking my tea...

Removes 99% of Scum...

They're trying to pretend over on holtendersdotherestofusreallygiveatoss.com that Smugberg is some kind of working class hero cos he and some of the other Swedes got sent home from international duty for going out on the piss: a night on the lash with Olof, ooh now that's the sort of entertainment you wouldn't want to pass on, eh?
In other news, the Prince of Darkness is trying to attract Tangoman away to the bright lights of London (well, the dim candles of Loftus Road actually)

Your tour operator recommends

That you don't all fight at once over the two seats left after your correspondent decided not to haul her supersize backside down to Kenilworth Road, but to take it instead, complete with appropriately sized undies, to watch Thomas The Jones. I'm sure you were expecting me to do that anyway, after all it's not unusual! I also have it on good authority (shouted through the hatch in the Anchor by Jan) that seating is unreserved, so maybe you terrible drunken reprobates will prize yourselves out of the pub before 2.59..then again, maybe not.

Been there, done that....

Ah I remember it well, don't you? Saturday 12th November 1898, with the Editor in goal, and Murph and Stern Dave leading the forward line, the ubiquitous Small Heath Alliance trounced the Hatters 9-0. Being as how I'm a bit of a Joanna come lately, I have to confess this will be the first time I've witnessed this clash. Been a while since we've played them, so let's give them something to remember us by, eh?

And the lucky winner is...?

They managed to draw with the Boing Boings recently, but we won't hold that against them. I'm trying not to sound patronising here, but Luton are the kind of side who may be full of good honest endeavour, but who we should tear limb from limb in our inexorable march to the promised land. This is of course Blues we are talking about, and we never make anything easy, so let's go for **0-2**

THE GABBIE CABBIE'S

BIRMINGHAM CITY MOMENT

Blues 0 Leicester City 0

Another shit result at Leeds, nearly as bad as the one at Stoke
And how daft is Jonty the mad Ulster man and I reckon Tebiley is a joke
Is he really worthy of a shirt as once more the African had a mare
Celtic fans had it right when they nicknamed him bombscare.

Well for Brucie the time is running out as things are going from bad to worse
And it's just bad management like its always been and not no dreaded curse
Right positive hat on now it's Robert Kelly's Leicester city up next but sadly neither are going to score
In this East vs West Midlands derby clash in a boring goalless draw.

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John Lewis of Solihull " the Kings of Touchwood"

Gabbie Cabbie's Trivia Question: **Who's played football for Scotland and cricket England?**

LOOK WHO'S TALKING?

Has Steve Bruce done enough yet this season to earn the right to publicly criticise the fans at St Andrews ?

Bruce failed at his job last season in the biggest possible way that any manager can. We got relegated. If he is now saying that winning games and being top of the league is "all that matters" then surely last season losing games and being relegated should be "all that mattered" as opposed to his harping on about injuries and bad luck.

Although we had (in their own words) "the strongest squad in our history" fans were forced to watch helplessly as we slid tamely out of The Premiership. During the season we witnessed bizarre team selections (Middlesbrough at home, Alex Bruce in midfield instead of Butt when Alex had never played there before, naming a sub against Man City who wasn't within 50 miles of the ground, playing one up front away from home in games we HAD to win etc), shambolic performances (Liverpool in the cup) and highly paid prima donnas hardly working up a sweat.

Throughout all of that the Board told Bruce he could be as useless as he wanted and keep his job.

Despite the fact that most managers would have been shown the door long before the end of the season Blues fans never booed the manager, never chanted for him to be sacked and accepted that "like it or not" he was going to stay.

Bruce is fortunate in that he is cocooned from ridicule by work mates, and protected from the embarrassment most have to go through after relegation, by the fact that he works at Blues. Meanwhile blokes have to justify to their wives paying out an amount for them and a lad to watch 90 minutes of (up to now) dire football when that amount is equivalent to taking the whole family to the pictures AND going for a pizza afterwards.

Fans make massive sacrifices to watch their team whilst Bruce earns more in a week than the majority of them earn in a year. Financially he takes money OUT of the club, whilst forgetting that we PAY to watch them. Of course fans have the choice of not going and not renewing their season tickets - and many, many have decided that is exactly what they will do.

Yet the most loyal fans, those who came back for more of the same, are the ones being criticised because we aren't exactly enthusiastic about the fact.

Bruce kept his VERY well paid job despite completely under performing while we still have to fork out the same extortionate prices for an inferior product. If you pay £100 for dinner at The Ritz you expect things to be good, if you pay £100 for dinner at the local cafe then you would expect a blow job (Not all of us Rags - Mrs MIB) and dancing girls for your money.

Although Steve Bruce is crowing about our last two games, those displays were against Hull who are bottom of the league and QPR who have won something like one in the last 18

He seems to have conveniently forgotten very quickly how at Cardiff we capitulated against a side with inferior skill who were simply better organised and more determined, and how dire we were at Stoke managing only one shot (a missed penalty) on target.

Also these two recent "attacking displays" have come about with Johnson NOT playing in midfield, and many fans are strongly suspicious that if Kelly hadn't been injured that would not have been the case.

We may be "top of the league" but it is a league that we shouldn't be in, and a league that Steve Bruce should begin to take responsibility for getting us relegated to.

If he wants our support Bruce, has no right to demand it, he has to earn it.

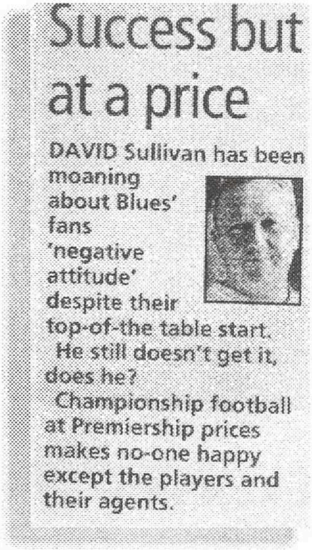
Don't TELL us Bruce, SHOW us!

Rags

IT'S NICE TO BE LISTENED TO!!!

PART TWO

It seems that our great leader and saviour David Sullivan is not too pleased with us supporters. The man, who it seems will never let us forget what he did to save our club, is almost ready to throw his toys out of the pram, because we've got the audacity to criticise the players, the manager and the club. Of course, being paying customers we're not allowed to have a say on how the club is run, or how the team is playing. All we are here for is to stump up the inflated prices that OUR club make us pay, sit there and take it.



Success but at a price

DAVID Sullivan has been moaning about Blues' fans 'negative attitude' despite their top-of-the table start.

He still doesn't get it, does he?

Championship football at Premiership prices makes no-one happy except the players and their agents.

Well said Mr Goldberg, it's just a pity that the people that could make a difference wont be listening, again!!!

Now that is the trouble with the people that run Birmingham City football club. They've got a lot to say about this and that, and they do like to spout off a bit, but all they've really got to do is listen. But that is something that they will never do. They are right, and we are wrong, no questions asked.

Now you would have thought that coming up to Brum and mixing with us, David Sullivan would have started to realise that we are quite a clever bunch us Brummies, and he would realise that Birmingham is not like London. We are not arrogant and that's for sure. We are down to earth people, who live down to earth lives, with down to earth jobs. Now this is something that just has not sunk in yet with Sully and KB, either that or they don't want to know. Wages here in the Midlands are lower than down south, and they are shorter in supply. Birmingham has always been a jobs black spot and a low wage area. Try telling that to the powers that be though. Is it that they just turn a deaf ear to what is going on in Birmingham, because their aim is to fleece us Bluenose's for as much as humanly possible? That is, of course something that they would deny. You cannot blame them for that but sometimes in life, you have to bite the bullet, and that time is surely coming where David Sullivan and his cronies must start to listen to our grievances.

Even in his article about how disappointed he is about the large section of the Birmingham public grumbling he has got it wrong. This is what he said:-

"I have been disappointed to see that a large section of the Birmingham public is still grumbling about the team and the club in general".

"I see a lot of people grumbling on the club notice boards. But there is not a club in the country who would be firing on all cylinders having brought in virtually a new team over the summer"

"I hope all the criticism stops, otherwise I am going to start complaining almost as much as some of our absent fans"

Yes, we are grumbling, and we are disappointed as well David, where else can we grumble? Message boards are the best place to put our grievances over on. Well for a start Mr. Sullivan it is not just absent fans who are moaning. If you go to games you would have heard the moaning and grumbling from the Tilton, the Kop, the Main stand and the Railway, those fans aren't absent. And if you would only listen you could then find out why those absent fans are just that "ABSENT".

Mr. Sullivan, don't you ever wonder why crowds are down, and some Bluenoses aren't coming to Stan's any more, and why they are moaning and grumbling? Or is it that you just do not care about their feelings, you just want them to shut up, bite the bullet and fill Stan's, no matter what? Please, let us know your feelings, because I know you've got feelings, but we have also. Is it that you just "DON'T GET IT" and by that I mean, that you do not get that why most Noses do not turn up is because of the prices. They are just too high. This is not London. This is a job black spot, and wages here are some of the lowest in the country.

If a supporter of the Blues has got a job, what comes first? Paying the mortgage, his (her) bills, making sure the kids are fed and clothed properly or to buying a ticket for £29.00 to see Blues play Leicester. To you, £29.00 isn't much but to some it's a tenth of their wages.

You only have to look at the crowds of our Championship rivals to see that something is drastically wrong with this area, and it is not just at the Blues'. They've got it bad over at the Baggies as well, and dare I say the attendances over at Vile Park weren't fantastic. The Vile have got much lower prices than us (higher league, lower prices) yet last season their attendances were down by a few thousand overall, but things are a little different this season with new hope being given to the twelve toed people that support them.

Just look at the attendance league table from two weeks ago and we were down in sixth spot. Teams like Derby, Leicester (both in turmoil), Norwich who are doing badly, Southampton and Coventry who all had better crowds than us. Why? We are doing very well in this league, in second spot and all the other teams mentioned are either struggling or in mid-table. Our crowds should be thousands more than the rest. You've even got Sheffield Wednesday, a team that have been struggling for two seasons, getting bigger crowds than us.

There can be one reason why we are struggling to get better crowds into St Andrews, and one reason only. It's just too expensive! We know it but why don't the board realise this? If there are any doubters out there in Bluenose Land, here's the proof that cost is the reason Noses aren't going. Take your mind back to our last promotion season (2001-2), and at the start of the campaign and there were a lot of pissed off Bluenoses. We had been humiliated up at Preston. I know the game itself was close but what happened just before the penalty shoot out, made us a laughing stock. That should have been our season, yet there we were again in the Nationwide. Crowds were keeping up quite well considering the feeling of discontent. In the first four games we had crowds of 19.091 vs Millwall, 18.478 vs Stockport, 19.421 vs Sheffield Wed and 18, 426 vs Burnley. We were in 5th or 6th spot. but back then the cost to enter St Andrews either by season ticket, or match day ticket was much, much lower. So if the cost's were on a par with five seasons ago but also allowing for inflation, I can honestly predict that our crowds now would be up by two to 3.000. That tells us that since 2001 and our promotion, we have now got more regular supporters, but we should be getting much bigger crowds and the reason we are not, is totally down to the costs, and the boards inability to listen to THEIR CUSTOMERS.

In the last issue of MIB, I wrote part 1 of "It's Good To Be Listened Too" and that is all the board have to do, not take cheap swipes at us. Gone are the days when all we demanded was 100% effort. That is all well and good when you are paying a fiver to stand on wind swept terracing. Now we are paying extortionate prices and we as customers, demand more. Like watching Premier league football to go with the Premier league prices. I think most Bluenoses now want to be entertained for their money and that means watching attacking football. Excitement is something we deserve and if we get a few goals thrown in, great, but even if we all go home from Stan's beaming with delight after seeing the team we all love thrash some poor souls from up north or down south, it still won't detract from the fact we are being fleeced and we probably always will be.

COVENTRY John 26	(1) 1	**LEEDS** Att: 22,146	(0) 0
DERBY Howard 44 (pen)	(1) 1	**PRESTON** Pugh 45 Att: 22,220	(1) 1
NORWICH Att: 24,618	(0) 0	**C PALACE** Kuqi 90	(0) 1
SOUTHAMPTON Rasiak 52	(0) 1	**PLYMOUTH** Att: 22,514	(0) 0
SUNDERLAND Hysen 66	(0) 1	**LEICESTER** Fryatt 48 Att: 35,104	(0) 1
WEST BROM Ellington 61	(0) 1	**SOUTHEND** Harrold 82 Att: 19.576	(0) 1

DOWN SOUTH AFRICAN ROAD WAY!!!

As Murph decided to take a day off and not go to QPR, the away day was left down to me. Most of the usual suspects that I've either been away with or know, weren't doing Rangers, so Mrs. MIB and I made the trip by train for this midweek game down in the Smoke. Luckily for us J (Mrs MIB) knows the Press Officer at QPR and organised a freebie for us which included a pass into the players lounge and free programmes.

The trains had been booked weeks, and weeks in advance, and the cheapest way from Birmingham International were singles there, and singles back. These knocked us back £20.00 each, which was a bit of a saving on the usual price of £38.00 for a return. Bloody Virgin, yes they are fast but give me Chiltern Railways any day. We landed at Euston at 2.55 and made a bee-line for the Rail bar which is called the Britannia. As always the shock of London prices hit home, with a lager and a double vodka and orange coming in at £7.40! Now I like a drink, but at those prices I'd be a poor man very quickly, so we said our goodbyes and made our way down to White City. Again the prices in the capital are a hard thing to swallow, with return tickets to the aforementioned underground station coming out at £5.60. To travel the same distance in Brum the cost would be £2.40, although that would be by bus.

Loftus Road is probably my most visited London ground, either for Blues games against QPR or Fulham, but also from when I lived in London, I visited Loftus Road a fair few times. I may have mentioned this before, but back in 1971 I saw QPR beat some team 7-0 in the FA Cup and Stanley Bowles missed a penalty after running from the halfway line for his run up!

Noses who have been to Loftus Road will know that the nearest Boozer is called the Springbok. For a pub so near to a football ground it isn't too bad, although I don't think that the Bok's South African owners knew what was going to hit them, as when it did start to get a little busy, they just didn't have enough staff on.

We sat outside as it was a very pleasant evening, and we were not really dressed for football as we had our nice threads on. While we were waiting for our match tickets, the then QPR manager Gary Waddock walked past and stopped for a chat. He seemed like a nice bloke, but with results not going QPR's way (our win didn't help) he got the push, with John Gregory taking over.

On our way into the Main Stand I saw a QPR fanzine for sale. It was called "A Kick Up The R's" and stopping to buy one, I asked "How much for the fanzine?" £2.50 came the reply.

THE BRITANNIA
The Springbok

Bloody hell, almost as much as the official programme! I saved myself a quid by doing a swap. It was the editor who I swapped with and he knew straight away who I was. Why? Because my name is the same as his. We're both called Dave Thomas, although I am much more good looking than him!

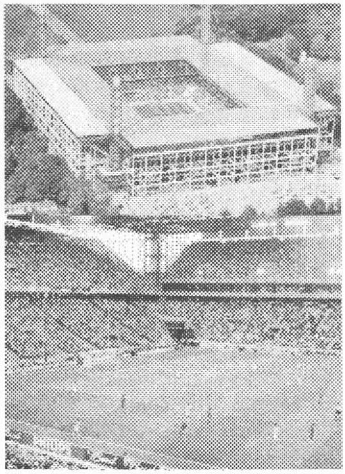
In the ground, we made our way to the players lounge. Now I know it was a freebie and I suppose I shouldn't say anything derogatory about the lounge, but it was a bit of a dump. On our way up to our seat, we bumped into David Gold and had a chat with him. He's a nice bloke and he seemed quite confident about the match.

Sitting in with the home fans, which I haven't done for a fair few seasons, you get a different perspective of the match. Any time QPR got the ball or attacked everybody around us were on their feet trying to give their team encouragement. In fact for 20 minutes of the second half most Rangers supporters around us sang non-stop. Although when we asked a Bluenose if they could hear any QPR singing, he said he couldn't. But when the 500 odd Bluenoses sang, we heard them loud and clear. Up until Bendtner got sent off Blues were very comfortable, then down to ten men we went very narrow. QPR used their wide players who put in numerous crosses but Bruno and Jaidi were standing strong. In the end we came out worthy winners to win 2-0 with only ten men.

Game over, we said our farewells and thank you's and made our way back to White City and then Euston. The only problem was that we had to wait 55 minutes for the last train back to Brum, having missed the 10.40 by five minutes. We bumped in Dave Maloney (Daveandthekids) and his partner in the station and ended up chatting all the way back to International. The eventful night wasn't quite over though. Both Dave and myself had parked in the International car park, a cost of £6.00 being due by inserting a plastic card into a pay station and your plastic card is then verified so that you can get out. No problem for mine. See ya Dave, drive careful. Down we went and out of the car park leaving Dave by the pay machine. I'm just about to drive off when I get a call from Dave telling me that his ticket wouldn't go in the machine and that no one was answering the buzzer at the help station. So I pulled up by the entry to the car park, and waived my hand over the sensor, but to no avail. So I reversed up a one way road and right to the entrance, the machine gave me a new plastic card and I drove back out, without going in. This left the barrier in the up position and by this time Dave had come out of the station. I guessed that until a car drove in the barrier would stay up, so there was only one thing to be done. I told Dave to get in is car and go for it as I was going home. Five minutes later I get a text saying "Thanks both for the get out of jail card, cheap as chips that car park! Sleep well". So, all in all a great day out, three points and a good deed done for a good mate.

PLAYERS
BAR

THE FC COLOG



Last Saturday before the match (vs Hull City) me and my mates met your mate Phil next to the ground. He was so kind to introduce us to his favourite pub two streets away (The Cricketers). We took the attached picture and Phil suggested that we could send it to your email as a contribution to your fanzine.

From left to right we are Christian (aka "Görgi"), Matthias and me, Stephan (aka "Hildener"); all the three of us are season ticket holders of 1. FC Köln - Cologne FC. We belong to the supporters club "In dubio pro Colonia". FC it is the German club with the living mascot, Hennes VII, a he-goat and he is present at all the home matches (quite a naughty boy, the no. 7, as he was in charge during all the four relegation's in our history!) Cologne has a population of 1 million and is famous for the cathedral and carnival (the latter is a party held six days before Ash Wednesday. The whole city - from 15 - 95 year olds are getting pissed and party with almost no limits - just great).

FC used to be a "big" club but got relegated four times in the past eight years. Anyway, once you have chosen your club there is no escape as it doesn't matter how unsuccessful they are. (And you thought us Bluenoses had it bad? - Ed)

Our rivals, Bayer Leverkusen who are less than ten miles away, would so much like to be our biggest rival, but they are not. They are nothing. No supporters, just money. Our traditional rivals are Borussia Mönchengladbach. Great matches in the past, always great atmosphere in the ground as they also have a big crowd following them (just one difference to Leverkusen); other than Leverkusen one has to respect them.

I'm quite confident that we'll be among the top 3 after the season. The team seems to be alright, the players chosen seem to have enough quality. Before the season we lost our striker Lukas Podolski to Munic. However, there are two other youngsters now, Helmes and Chihi, who might at least somehow replace "Prinz Poldi".

The start to our season was okay, three matches won, one lost. The next big match will be 2nd round Cup tie at the end of October when we'll be facing Schalke 04 at home; that's a big derby game. Probably, we'll be sold out with 50.000 and hopefully at the end there'll be a little surprise - FC beating Schalke. In the cup one never knows...

Visiting a match at the "Müngersdorfer" Stadium is highly recommendable, for sure. With low cost airlines one can make some really good deals. In comparison to the UK, tickets are quite cheap here. Season ticket prices are very cheap and they are about €225 for club members and €250 for non-members (£160.00 - £172.50) , sitting behind the goal in the

NE CONNECTION

upper tier which is the home area, the seats are alright. That's an average price and standing areas are much cheaper, sitting in the main stand is much more expensive.

Match-day tickets - they start from €5 standing/concessions, €9 standing and regular seats start from €14 up to €42. These are prices when buying in advance. On the day of the match you have to pay an additional cost of about €2 per ticket.

The atmosphere in the ground has pretty much improved after it has been rebuilt British style, with no running track.

We really enjoyed our weekend in Birmingham, having a couple of pints before in a local pub and the following match. Moreover I liked St. Andrews as it's always nice, when an old stand is "surviving". Altogether that was true British football culture!

Both of us - the Blues and FC got relegated last summer, so hopefully we will get promoted together again in 2007!

Take care and all the best for Phil. We felt really welcome in the pub.

LEEDS AWAY DAY - DEFEND

Up the M1 we went on a sunny morning, so I ignored the 'beware fog' signs that were placed every mile or so and arrived in Leeds about 12.30. I had dropped Mrs. Murph at Meadowhall shopping centre in Sheffield (as she has been to Leeds before and only likes visiting new grounds! ooh get her!) She could shop for Ireland and I would pick her up later, but like fools we had both forgotten our mobile phones. Unheard of these days! So we had to do what we did in the old days and arrange beforehand where to meet up; meet at 5.45 outside the car park.

I parked in Beeston, where the terrorists come from (only joking), as I always do at Leeds games to enable a quick getaway. I ambled down the hill towards Elland Road. Had I been doing this a few years ago, I would have been warily looking out for an ambush, but things have changed and everything was a friendly hubbub of fans meeting up, going for drinks, parking up and buying replica kit from the Leeds club shop. The only person I saw with a rucksack was Mrs. BlueSky (an exiled bluenose form up Newcastle way) and she ignored me; my anti-police disguise worked!

I was strolling towards a pub, when I noticed two 'Stone Islanded' up lads with Burberry caps etc, who crossed the road behind me and trailed me for 50 yards or so. I was getting myself ready for a bit of a 'do', when a voice from behind said 'scuse me like, de yaw knaw if there's a pub anywhere, mate?' (a poor attempt at typing brummie), I gave them the directions to the pub about a 100 yards ahead which was the one I was going to.

It was now a really sunny day and the pub was half full with Noses and the MIB crowd were sat outside supping beer and chatting. MIB Dave and I swapped stories about previous trips to Leeds, and the aggro that started as soon as we had got off the train only to be met by equal numbers and the ambushes on the long walk from the train station. Ah, those were the days, we didn't need mobile phones then as we knew that in enemy territory, a mob of well wishers would be waiting.

My mind can't help thinking back to the 70's,as I see so many 'old boys' attending the

Missing!!
0,000 Leeds "fans"
Last seen
21st May 2006
illenium Stadium,
Cardiff
Info ring:
Tine Supporters

, YOU'RE HAVING A LAUGH!

games, and I don't mean Zulu's I mean the pre Zulu, 70's boot boys. They are all grey haired now (well those with hair) and still follow the Blues, mainly for the beer and craic these days. I include myself in this group. MIB Dave told me of how he lost a few teeth in an ambush in Norwich many years ago, and proceeded to show me the evidence of his absent teeth. Not a pretty sight!

Statue?

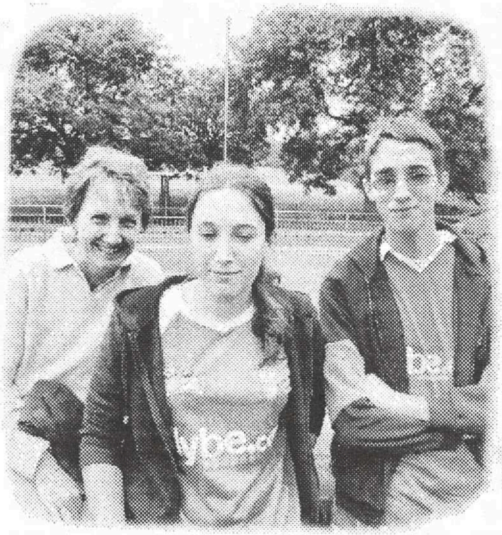
Outside the ground, I stood with other Noses basking in the sun next to the statue of Billy Bremner, and two things came in to my mind. **First:** who would *we* have a statue of outside Stan's? Joe Bradford, Bertie Auld, Trevor Francis? Christophe Duggary? All of them could be with a shout. My own choice would be Bertie Auld. Why? He introduced our anthem, 'Keep Right On' to the players and it was taken up by the fans during the 1956 cup run. The song says more about us Noses than anything else. He was also a terrier of a player, hard as nails and liked a drink! (reminds me of Blues fans).

The **second** thought occurred while I was looking at the huge Police presence; all body armour, horses, dogs and more camera's than the BBC outside broadcasting team, I saw a copper with a bleached blond 'Savage-like' pony tail and he was stood next to the statue, looking about, posing and filming Blues fans and my thought was...What a prat!!

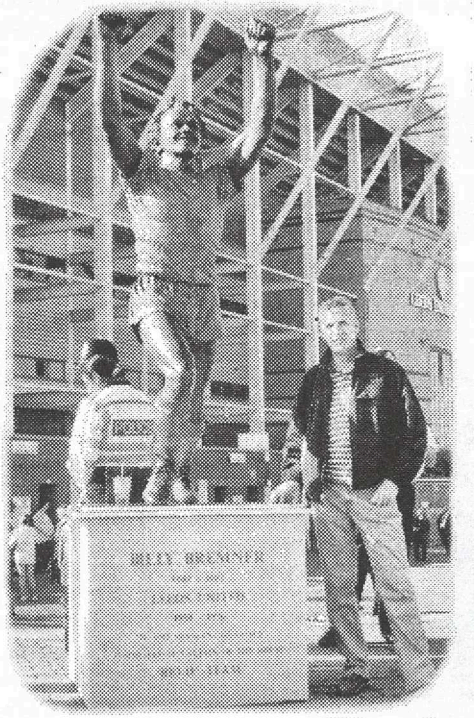
The away end at Leeds is one of the crappiest. Poor facilities and posts that obscure the view. The queue for beer was long and full of singing Noses halfway through a beer, but in the queue for their next! Elland Road was half empty and it's a shame to see the whole of the top tier of the East stand devoid of fans, although I think we filled our allocation.

The game started at a fast pace and Blues were defending like a comedy act. They looked like they had only met just before the game. I don't like to do our boys down but, Billy Smart's circus clowns could defend better than our back four. They were running about like headless chickens, afraid of the ball and as for marking?

McSheff hit the bar and then we let them come straight up our end. After comedy defending by DJ, where he tried to be clever and instead of clearing an easy ball he lost it, conceded a hand ball. Following poor marking at the free kick were one down, but the Blues fans were in fine voice, especially after an equaliser. Then the Horse showed that he could dive with the best of them by theatrically falling over after a rash challenge.



The bar was doing a roaring trade, and despite having no TV's many Blues fans just stayed there during the game and at half time they were joined by a milling throng trying to get a beer. The long wait and poor service meant that some tempers were fraying. Now my first half enjoyment was enhanced by the comments of a lad of 12 or 13, who had learnt his football from TV pundits, his Dad and Uncles etc. 'Are you taking bungs, ref', 'show some commitment,' 'fight for the shirt, 'show some commitment' 'it's a whole new ball game', and loads more that I can't remember. He was 'cliché kid' and was giving me and those around some great amusement.



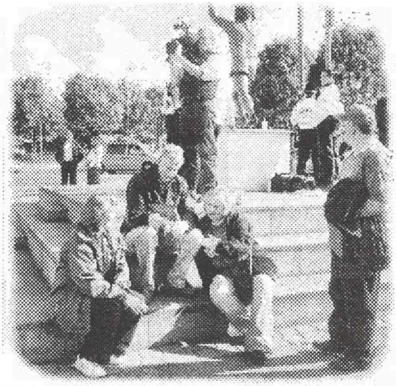
The second half was brightened by the appearance of 'pony tail cop' He was getting stick the Blues fans sang 'Are you Savage in disguise' and 'where's your camera gone?' As soon as the 'gay boy' chants started, out came the camera again.

The comedy continued and Taylor went off injured to be replaced by Tebily. Now I like him and he always gives 100%, but he, like Taylor, is not a natural footballer and whenever they go near the ball, I am expecting a 'clown like slip up. After getting back to all square, following Jonty's sending off (which I missed because I turned around following a comment from cliché kid) Tebs scored a great own goal.

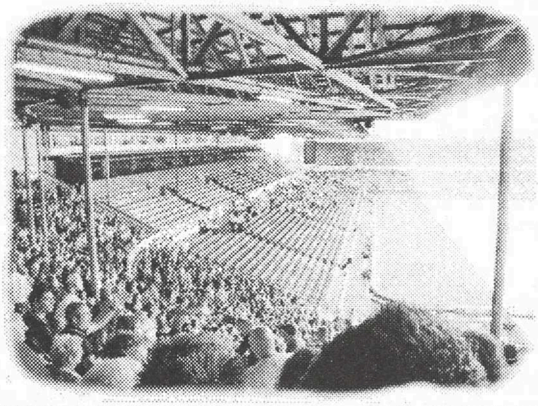
At this winning goal, the Leeds fans sprung in to voice and a small mob of them ran towards us from the left to posture and offer us out after the game. 'Pony tail cop' just watched and let them carry on, and posed. We had a good shout for a penalty turned down and the game petered out.

Our attacking performance was very good and on another day we would have come away with all three points. It was dire defending and some red mist from Jonty I assume. Thanks cliché kid. Combined with the backlash of a team who have just sacked their manager that led to us leaving with nothing.

As I left, I saw about a dozen chav Blues fans



surrounded by Police. It looked like they had been up to no good and were destined for a night in the cells. As I emerged in to the sunlight from the dark of the stand, I was met by a huge number of Police and I was temporarily blinded by the sun reflecting off their high visibility jackets.



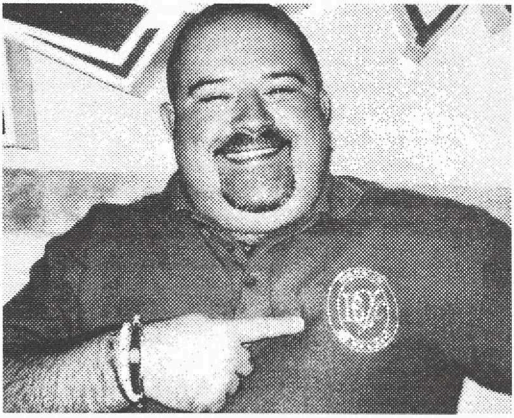
I picked up Mrs. M from Meadowhall and we were back in a pub in Hatton by 7.30. From a fans away day point of view, it was a good day out, beer, five goals, a dodgy penalty, a sending off and a 'homer' referee. From a Blues footie point of view, it was a bad day at the office.

What will Bruce say to Jonty after yet another show of petulance? Nothing I'll bet, and as soon as he returns from his three match ban, he'll get the armband back. What a leader, what a fine example. As he trudged off some fans applauded him, I don't know why, unless it was for the comedy value.

I wonder if Bruce managed to get the defence in to his car? You know the one. The doors keep falling off, the wheels buckle, the engine drops out and steam comes out the exhaust.

KRO - Murph

DJ HAMMER



Here is DJ Hammer modelling an MIB polo shirt (£12 obtainable from MIB sellers all around the ground). Gary Hammers (real name), is resident DJ at Hero's Sports Bar - the biggest in Abu Dhabi, where English football rules supreme. Gary, a West Ham fan, loves the banter with the ex-pat Blues fans. The two sets of supporters have always enjoyed a special relationship as any Bluenose can testify when they have paid a visit to Upton Park, and come away bruised and battered after falling foul of the east end dockers. Thanks for modelling our polo shirt Gary, keep up the tunes in Heroes and hopefully when we get promoted we can continue our "friendly" rivalry. Keep Right On.

P.S. - We have MIB rugby and polo shirts in stock.

BLUE REPOR

Blues 2 IPSWICH 2

Blues lost their 100% home record this afternoon following a 2-2 draw with Ipswich Town.

Following on from recent crazy home games (see bizarre events that unfolded against Colchester, Palace and Hull) this game didn't disappoint in the 'Leaving The Ground Scratching Your Head Wondering What You've Just Seen' stakes. Blues twice came back from behind, doing so the second time playing with only ten men and only one defender. That defender was Martin Taylor too, so even that may be stretching the point a little. (For all you Martin Taylor fans sat their wearing your 'Tiny Is Misunderstood' t-shirts, don't throw your toys out of the pram, scream at your computer screen and stop reading.. you never know, I might be nice to him later..)

Anyway, back to the start.. Steve Bruce made two changes from the team that won at QPR during the week. Mehdi Nafti returned from injury to take Fabrice Muamba's place in the heart of the midfield, whilst the suspended Nicklas Bendtner was replaced up front by Cameron Jerome. As with the previous two games, this meant that Radhi Jaidi and Bruno N'Gotty were actually the only two Blues defenders on the pitch, with Damien Johnson and Sebastian Larsson playing as full-backs as they did at QPR.

I am so used to writing that Blues started slowly but grew into the game, that it feels a little bit strange to report that today Blues started really brightly but gradually faded. That's what happened though. Blues came out of the blocks like a really fast starting sprinter, but as the half progressed they resembled Paula Radcliffe more and more.

During Blues' good start Jaidi had a header from a David Dunn corner cleared off the line, and Blues really bossed proceedings. Gary McSheffrey was lively, and Johnson and Larsson both got forward well from their defensive positions. Ipswich looked a little shell-shocked early on.

Credit where credit's due though, the visitors began to get the ball down and play some neat football at about the same time as Blues began to get frustrated at their lack of progress. As Ipswich settled, Blues resorted to long balls at Jerome's head, and the balance of the game shifted Ipswich's way somewhat.

Up front for Blues Jerome and DJ Campbell were struggling to get any sort of service from those behind them - unless you count service as being balls coming at them from 60 yards away about 7 foot in the air. Campbell made what he could of the situation, and looked quite lively, but Jerome really struggled. It's unfair to level too much criticism at the ex-Cardiff man himself though, because like his predecessor Emile Heskey, he doesn't look like he particularly enjoys the aerial side of things as much as he does getting the ball down at his feet. We all know that Blues' eyes light up when we have a tall centre forward though, and suddenly ball after ball is lumped at his head.

Blues were also hampered somewhat by an injury to Jaidi who clashed heads with Ipswich striker Alan Lee. Whilst Jaidi got back to his feet, it appeared that the club doctor made the decision that he couldn't continue, and as such Martin Taylor came on to replace him. A couple of Ipswich efforts aside - a long range shot from Sylvain Legwinski and a decent chance by the lively Mark Noble (who proved why he was so highly-regarded at West Ham) and that was that as far as the first half was concerned.

Having started one half well, Blues were in no mood to push the boat out or anything and try that again, so they came out looking sluggish at the start of the second half, and were punished after only a few minutes. Ipswich had a corner which was not really cleared, and enter David Dunn - someone who always likes to tee up a goal for a striker. Dunn's never really been one for hoofing the ball - he likes to caress it and treat it with respect, as if it were a dancer in the Rocket Club. However, there's a time and a place for nice little touches, and facing your own goal about 8 yards out surrounded by opposition players isn't one of them. Dunn tried to bring the ball down on his thigh, the ball headed towards Maik Taylor's goal, and Lee was on hand to smash Ipswich into the lead.

Ipswich were on top now, and Blues looked more nervous than a small child asking Mike Tyson if the rumours about his sexuality are true. Johnson had to come to the rescue on a couple of occasions at the back, as Ipswich played some excellent football and threatened every time they went forward. Lee in particular was proving to be a right handful, in the Alan Shearer sense - he was playing fairly well, but was always in the faces of the officials, pulling shirts, backing into people and generally bending the rules a little. Fair play to him though, as he was giving N'Gotty his first real test of the season, and N'Gotty was beginning to get frustrated with him... watch this space.

Blues did start to get themselves back into the game, and Dunn went close before McSheffrey dillied and dallied and took too long when he himself was presented with a good chance. After 73 minutes though Blues were level, and Dunn was again setting up goals. This time it was at the right end, as Ipswich 'keeper Lewis Price fumbled his long-range effort and Campbell following in did well to turn the ball into the net. Price looked fairly solid in goal for Ipswich with his positioning and command of his penalty area, but his handling on some shots was decidedly questionable.

About five minutes later Ipswich were ahead again though, as Larsson stupidly cleared the ball across the pitch from left-back, when it should have gone down the pitch. The ball found it's way to Simon Walton whose shot took a wicked deflection and wrong-footed Maik Taylor and nestled in the back of the net. Raidi Jaidi, who really was now the boy with the thorn in his side, clearly decided he'd had enough of Lee by this point, so decided to punch the celebrating Ipswich forward. We've all been there, haven't we? Someone's been winding you up for over an hour, then they get all cocky, and you just want to punch them. Well, Jaidi did, and was sent off.

This now left Blues 2-1 down with just ten men. Add to this the fact that the only defender on the pitch wearing a Blues shirt was Martin Taylor (who, in fairness to him, was superb this afternoon after he came on - especially as he was the only Blues defender for the last 10 minutes) and things looked a bit of a mess. Blues had 7 midfielders on the pitch though, together with strikers. Unfortunately they didn't go with the 1-7-2 formation that the personnel allowed, and that mean Steve Bruce bloke made Johnson and the overall disappointing Neil Danns play as defenders in a 3-4-2 formation.

Blues are not only making a good habit of getting players sent off this season, but also of scoring important goals once their numbers have been diminished. They did it after Jerome's dismissal against Colchester and they did it after Bendtner's dismissal against QPR, and they did it here again today. Blues' mad midfielder overload/lack of defenders formation worked a treat by confusing everyone in the stadium, including Ipswich. After McSheffrey was cynically fouled on the edge of the area, he played a short free-kick to Dunn who was obviously so upset at not being involved at all in Ipswich's second goal that he played a one-two with an Ipswich defender (his right foot shot was charged down) before firing home with his left foot.

Blues then moved to a 4-4-1 formation to hold onto the point, understandably, and again, this involved people playing all over the place. Damien Johnson (who was excellent again) moved into the heart of defence to partner Martin Taylor, and thus tick off 'Central Defender' on his list of duties carried out for Blues, leaving only 'Striker' and 'Goalkeeper' unfulfilled. Let's face it, they'll both happen though, won't they? If Geoff Horsfield and Nigel Gleghorn have both been allowed a go in goal in the past, it's only a matter of time before Johnson gets his chance. As I say though, he was excellent again today, in all his positions.

So, there we go. At the start of this report I said that the game left you wondering quite what had gone on, and I still think that - it was a crazy second half. I'm not totally sure what to make of it, but I suppose you have to be happy with a point when you're down to ten men and have been behind twice. Throw into the equation the fact that Ipswich were comfortably the best team we've played this season, and it's hard to be too down about the result given how events unfolded. In saying that though, Blues finally started a game well, and this in turn got the fans behind them, and they really needed to capitalise on that, but didn't. Had Jaidi's header gone in, maybe it could all have been very different. Blues got frustrated at their inability to break Ipswich down a little too quickly for my liking, and their good start soon turned into a pretty average display. Still, as I say, given what happened I think you have to take a point, say that we've got one of the better teams in the division out of the way, and move on. So I will.

Blues 4 Wrexham 1

(After Extra Time)

Blues eventually saw off League Two Wrexham to progress to the 3rd Round of the Carling Cup with a 4-1 victory after extra time.

The Welsh visitors forced the game into extra time after earning a 1-1 draw in normal time, with Blues having to come from behind through Cameron Jerome who equalised Chris Llewellyn's earlier strike.

Steve Bruce made many changes to the Blues side – as you'd expect – with Colin Doyle coming in for Maik Taylor in goal. There was a totally new back four to start the game, with Stephen Kelly, Martin Taylor, Olivier Tebily and Marcos Painter coming in to play across the defence from right to left respectively. Sebastian Larsson moved across the pitch and further upfield to play wide right, whilst Fabrice Muamba and Neil Kilkenny provided a youthful central midfield. Gary McSheffrey did keep his place wide left (his natural back-up Julian Gray is apparently still ill), with Cameron Jerome being given another start up front alongside Mikael Forssell.

Early on the game was pretty much as you'd expect from such a Cup tie – Blues had plenty of possession through Kilkenny and Muamba in the midfield, but they struggled to break a well-organised Wrexham side down. Whilst Wrexham had conceded 10 goals in their last 2 games, prior to that they'd actually had a pretty impressive start to the season, and they looked a decent enough side. Blues were restricted to a couple of long range Painter efforts which did little to trouble Michael Ingham in the visitors' goal.

Wrexham took the lead somewhat against the run of play after half an hour through Llewellyn's strike. The visitors earned themselves a corner after John McAliskey – who had only signed on loan from Huddersfield on the day, and was fairly impressive in a Peter Crouch appearance and performance stylee throughout the evening – forced Doyle into an impressive save following a smart bit of control and a fierce volley. From the corner, Blues failed to clear their lines and Llewellyn, who came through the Norwich ranks at a similar time to Craig Bellamy, smashed the ball into the back of the net from close range.

This seemed to shock Blues and raise Wrexham whose band of travelling fans continually diminished in numbers through them getting arrested – surprise surprise. Darren Ferguson (son of Alex) should have made it 2-0 shortly afterwards as Wrexham put Blues under increased pressure.

Shortly before half-time, however, Blues were level through Jerome's second goal for the club. McSheffrey continued his fine 100% record of setting up every single Blues goal since his arrival at the club (statistic slightly exaggerated) with a deep cross which Jerome was going to head into the back of the net, but decided in the end to just chest it in (or that's how it looked) to level things up at half-time – although Forssell missed a great chance seconds before the interval.

Wrexham started the second half impressively too, and tricky winger Josh Johnson really should have done better when presented with a fine opportunity whilst unmarked at the far post. For Blues, Jerome and Forssell were one again illustrating why they're 3rd and 4th choice strikers this season with poor displays. Nicklas Bendtner and DJ Campbell were sat on the bench improving their first team prospects without doing anything, such were the ineffective displays of Jerome and Forssell. Granted, Jerome scored a goal, but otherwise he was pretty poor, and about two decent touches aside, Forssell continued to look a shadow of his former self.

So, midway through the second half – as against Shrewsbury in the last round – Jerome and Forssell were hauled off with Bendtner and Campbell replacing them. The difference in the movement up front was noticeable immediately, and within minutes the two had combined to allow Campbell to knock the ball past Ingham only to be dragged down in the penalty area. The penalty was duly awarded, and Campbell insisted on taking it despite McSheffrey's pleas – the ex Coventry man clearly desperate to get his first goal for the club. As I said about two reports ago, Campbell's finishing is dreadful when he has time to think about it, and with a penalty, there's not much more time you can have to think about it. In fairness he did send Ingham the wrong way, but he also sent the ball the wrong way, and well wide.

The penalty incident clearly got to McSheffrey and Campbell in different ways – but with similar results. McSheffrey obviously decided he was going to score no matter what, and Campbell obviously decided he needed to make up for his miss, and so both took it upon themselves to shoot every time they got within 80 yards of the Wrexham goal. Neither of them scored, full-time came, and with the teams level, both sides prepared for extra time.

David Dunn came on for Muamba for the extended period. Muamba had given an impressive display in midfield alongside Kilkenny who also gave an excellent account of himself. On the other side of the coin, both Kelly and Painter will have been disappointed with the contributions that they made.

Whether it was down to Wrexham's tiredness or not, I don't know, but Blues showed their class in extra time to ease past the visitors in the end. This was mainly down to Kilkenny, Bendtner, McSheffrey, Campbell and Dunn playing against a Wrexham team who appeared to suddenly lose all their earlier organisation, and the class of those five made them pay.

McSheffrey hit the bar with a free-kick before he did get his first goal for Blues with a stunning half-volley which he took first-time after a corner was cleared to him some 25 yards from goal to make it 2-1 after 105 minutes.

During the second half of extra time, Blues added two more, thanks to some sublime through balls by Kilkenny. Firstly he managed to pick out Bendtner who broke Wrexham's offside trap along with McSheffrey and Campbell, leaving poor Michael Ingham facing all three of them. Bendtner drew the 'keeper, before slipping the ball across to McSheffrey who netted his second.

Not long later Kilkenny found Bendtner again with another superb through ball, and this time the Dane drew Ingham out again before rounding him himself and slotting the ball into the empty net. Kilkenny even picked out a couple more of these through balls to find Bendtner (again) and Campbell late on, but Blues settled for 4-1. Kilkenny's through balls showed some of his ability, but also highlighted to easy you can make it look if you have forwards making the right runs. Jerome and Campbell had wandered off to the dressing room before the second half of extra time when Blues ran Wrexham ragged with forward movement – perhaps they should have stayed and watched and learnt something.

And that was that – credit to Wrexham for their 90 minute performance, which was decent enough. They were torn apart after that though, when Blues introduced their more in-form players, and Blues will have been pleased just to progress after being given something of a scare. A useful run out for the likes of Kilkenny and Muamba, and it won't have done McSheffrey and the frighteningly good Bendtner any harm either, so all in all, can't complain too much.

McSHEFFREY
28

WHAT'S WRONG WIT

Some recent articles in MIB have been raising the issue of the way Blues fans aren't what they used to be. Gone, it seems, are the days when we'd give our players our most passionate support irrespective of the hash they had made of the past 15 passes. Booing our own players and shouting abuse at them is often heard around the ground, it is reported. No longer, it seems, do we raise the roof regardless of how we are playing or where we are in the league, whichever one that might be. It is suggested that this negativity and apathy might have something to do with the kind of players we have, the way the club is managed, or even the type of fans that we attract to St Andrews these days.

First, I think a very basic principle needs to be established. The notion of booing and abusing players in a Birmingham City strip is not only inappropriate and counter-productive; it is downright absurd. I remember the occasion when Nicky Butt was re-instated to the side after his tantrum when he was dropped from the team in favour, it seemed, of Brucie's son. As his name was announced over the PA, a substantial number of fans felt it appropriate to boo him. I sat there thinking: "Hang on. Nicky Butt is just about to play for Birmingham City. He is just about to do his utmost to help get the ball in the back of the opposition net for the cause of Birmingham City, and yet there are fans actually booing him!" As it happened, Butt should have been applauded, not only for his imminent endeavors, but also by showing the passion and full-blooded commitment to be cheesed off at not being previously selected! However we feel about them, let us express our criticism of players from the respectful distance of The Anchor or on these venerable pages, but not in the manner which is likely to adversely affect their performance on the pitch.

Nevertheless, the way in which we support the team has changed in recent years. I am not sure that it has a great deal to do with the amount players get paid, irrespective of how obscenely high the pay cheques are. I don't believe that our players try to 'cruise' or have a quiet life on a Saturday afternoon. Some of the most highly-paid professionals have got themselves into that position *because* of their commitment and hard work. The level of fitness and the physical demands on the modern pro are well documented and players could not sustain this high level without the sweat and graft.

I believe that what has changed is the way that we all see our club and what we expect from Birmingham City. My father brought me down the Blues for the first time, to watch us beat Blackpool on a dark, gray but somehow magical evening back in 1968. He died 12 years ago having never seen the club he loved achieve any significant success. When we were finally promoted to the Premier League four years ago, I remember thinking how I would have loved to have had my dad next to me as the team emerged from the tunnel to face some of the world's great

H BIRMINGHAM CITY SUPPORTERS?

clubs. How proud and fulfilled he would have felt, to see Birmingham City emerge from obscurity and show the promise and growth that we have awaited for so long. Let's face it, we all felt that Blues had come of age and were on the brink of achieving the status that has for so long eluded us. Then to see it dashed, arguably with one of the best squads Blues had ever had, was heartbreaking.

Our expectations were high. They still are. There is nothing wrong with that. We should be wanting Blues to get back into the Premiership. Passionately. So when we see our team playing badly, or players making mistakes, this frustration is sometimes expressed negatively. We have not changed as a fan base. We felt, and still feel, that the club is on the brink of great things. We have to re-learn how to be Brummies. We have to re-learn how to express to those players how much we are behind them. Those that shout abuse and boo are frustrated, but they are as committed as everybody else. Their blood is still blue. We must try to overlook the way our club appears to have been appropriated by apparent commercial demands of the day ('sponsored' substitutions and Sunday evening fixtures spring to mind!). We still have committed owners, directors, players, and a manager who is out to prove a few things, and who is learning. I am hopeful that I shall see Blues achieve greatness in my lifetime. It takes patience. More, much more than we have been displaying. It also takes true Brummies to continue to show the loyalty and passion which, as a previous correspondent suggested, made us famous. There is nothing wrong with Birmingham City supporters. Nothing at all. It is just that we need reminding that we are Brummies. Oh yes we are.

Arnie

TESCO SPORT VOUCHERS

Support kids' football in your area! Sporting FC are based in Hodge Hill, and turn out teams from Under 7s up to Under 16s in the local leagues. We are collecting **Tesco Sport Vouchers**. If you have any spare, please give them to your friendly MIB seller, who will make sure they find their way to us. We are also always grateful for sponsorships or donations: visit us at www.sportingfc.co.uk to find out more. Many thanks.

RETURN OF THE BLAC

Yeah I know it has been over a season since my last piece but I have been busy – honest.

You may recall that this fine fanzine agreed to collect old Blues shirts for an African village that I was helping at the time. This was towards the end of the season before last – remember?
Well you lot came up trumps like Bluenoses everywhere always do.

If I can recall, we collected over 30 shirts, of which 13 were Blues home strips.

They were given to the charity "Wonder Years Centre of Excellence" based in Wednesbury (YAM YAM LAND) and they eventually shipped them as part of a larger container load of stuff out to Gambia on the West Coast of Africa.

The village of Medina Salam (it stands for village of peace) were amazed to think that football fans in England were thinking of them and would support them in this way.
It has taken this long to get a photo of the shirts being where they are supposed to be for many reasons.
Firstly, the young team had to earn the shirts by agreeing to work as a team and develop their pitch to a better standard. (We say pitch............ it was more of a sand and dirt area without markings, with goats grazing on it and skin cutting weeds covering key areas of the pitch)

Secondly, the shirts had to be got out there and so they had to wait for the next shipment of stuff that had been donated to go out there.
Thirdly, and this is true, I swear to God.......... the shirts caused such a stir, and they were so proud of owning them that they went walkabout for about many months. By that I mean to say that the players (before they began their season) would go travelling to other African nations to visit family etc, and would take the shirts to show them off to everyone that they met.

Birmingham City FC and the MIB is forging links around the world.

Cool or what !

The village has about 700 inhabitants, of which about 400 are football mad boys and men. And when I say football mad, I mean CRAZY as a box of frogs, and man can they play. Many of them would walk into any 2nd division side right now – and I am serious. Skilled, fast as S**T and hard as nails.

Below is a picture of one of the village teams (they have four) wearing our shirts with pride and what you can see in the background "IS" the goal posts that they use complete with bending cross bar. Mad eh?

They talk of Zidane, Beckham and Ronaldo so I tried to teach them the Blues line up without much success.

When I was out there working as a volunteer building, doing education, and other stuff just to help out, they arranged for a match between the village main team and the charity.
They asked me to play.........

Now I am no Trevor Francis, but I did my best, and alas only lasted about fifteen minutes before being taken off due to excessive use of crap football skills.

The aims of the charity project includes developing the pitch to include standing areas so that they can enter an official Gambian league thus enabling them to bring in revenue to the village through paying supporters.

K COUNTRY BLUENOSE

They need help.
Chill out !! This is not a request for cash. But if you know anyone that fancies giving up some of their time for a life changing experience of working in Africa for a week or more and especially if they have skills or resources to help the project, then they would love to hear from you.

You can contact them, through me at: HYPERLINK mailto: info@stretchdevelopment.com
or on **07958 523539.**

Football is so important to the people as it serves as a welcome relief from the hardship that is everyday life for them out there. Poverty is the norm here, and poor nutrotion and illiteracy are common place.

Malaria can kill many people during the wet season and just 25p can enable them to get to a hospital and get a jab that can save their life.
The problem is that they do not have 25p so they at best get ill and at worst..........?, well you know.......

25p, £1, £5 or £10 per month would save lives and change lives for the better. Do you fancy getting involved?

But most of all, on behalf of the village of Medina Salam and the charity Wonder Years, can I say a **HUGE thank you** to every Blue Nose that gave a shirt for this project. You are stars.

Until next time, ta ta for now from the Black Country Blue Nose.

JOYS & SORROWS WITH AFF

I've been thinking about what I could possibly write about in this column, this week. Nothing too mind-blowing has happened at St Andrews since the last edition of MIB came out. Usually a column is easy to write. It's a case of picking up all the bad things that are happening, placing them in a bag, driving down to Steve Bruce's pad and dumping them on his doorstep before driving off.

The truth is though that Bruce seems to be turning it around somewhat. As the weeks go by I seem to be seeing more and more people gingerly putting their faith back in the manager. More correct decisions are being made and mistakes are talked about and worked on as opposed to being swept under the carpet like last season. Too many times during our relegation were heads buried in the sand, in the rotten belief that we'd "be okay." We weren't.

After Cunningham launched his stinging (and some would say correct) attack on the club, a mini-revolution started behind the scenes. Out went the overpaid, under-performing 'stars' and in came players with a desire to prove themselves. Pre-match planning was improved, the minor niggles were looked into and a sense of professionalism seemed to sweep through certain sections of the club.

But then we stepped across the white-line and the clueless and overly-cautious tactics remained. For the first 3-4 games of the season, Blues focused on not losing the game. Win it if we can but don't lose it. It wasn't good enough. We are favourites for this division and everyone from here to Timbuktu must realise that if we play well, not many sides would take something from us. We're not just favourites, we're justified favourites.

The fans - and the board - called for more attacking line-ups. More attacking line-ups came. We started winning games and spent a small spell at the top of the division. It was a cruel taster of what this season could be like, but as the season is wearing on, the team is looking better and better although ironically, results have dropped with just one point taken from our last six.

Well... five goals against in just those two games doesn't help. Neither does a shocking disciplinary record that has left us hanging on for dear life against two sides who I firmly believe will be right up there come the end of the season. Despite those negatives, we've scored four and looked like scoring more. We've scored twice whilst having 10 men on the field (4 times if you also take into consideration the QPR and Colchester games!) and Blues fans are beginning to see some of this so-called young and hungry talent that we've heard so much about.

So, five goals against. Why exactly?

Is it down to the simple fact that more attack-minded play leaves more gaps at the back? Or not having a settled back-four? Or suspensions and injuries taking their toll meaning sub-standard players have to deputise?

For anti-Bruce people it will be a lack of planning before the season started. They would probably say that Tebs and Taylor were never good enough and that we were never fully covered at full-back. I'd probably agree with the left-back position. Damien Johnson does an admirable job at right-back (when he's not elbowing people in the face) and Kelly is more than adequate back-up. In fact, Kelly would probably do the job better given a long run in the side but Bruce dug his own grave with the Johnson as captain thing.

Left-back is a place that we've never really had covered since Clapham left. Whilst Clapham wasn't flashy or spectacular, he did his job and did it well. He was a guaranteed 6 out of 10 week in, week out and why we didn't offer him a new one year deal is beyond me. Asking Sadler to go a full season as first choice full-back was a big ask in my book. Bruce has Jules, Larsson and Painter as back-up. Larsson looks far from comfortable there (despite Arsene Wenger saying it's okay to play him there!), Painter is new to the position and looked woefully average against Leeds. Meanwhile playing Jules at left-back has all but destroyed his confidence as a player and the only way of him getting it back would be a run in a side in his natural position of left-wing. He must also move on from St Andrews since the boo-boys will, I fear, always have it in for him. Instead of chasing striker after striker near the end of the window, a left-back should have been a priority.

The more attack-minded approach can, of course, be used as a reasonable excuse as to why we find ourselves currently so inept at the back. It's a new place to be for us since over the last five or so years, we've built from the back and been solid and especially hard to beat. I'm not so sure whether we'd have conceded 3 silly goals against Leeds had N'Gotty and Jaidi been there together. They looked to be forming a solid partnership earlier in the season. Will they reform that when N'Gotty comes back from his 3 game ban? Will Matty Upson have something to say or will Bruce even use Upson as a left-back since he's predominantly left-footed?

The settled back four can also be thrown about by pro-Bruce supporters who are looking for other reasons as to why we've suddenly become so fragile. Changing so many players across a defence week in and week out is bound to upset the apple-cart and especially when the players coming in have never played before or see very little first team action. Who knows what Tiny would be capable of given a run in the side and a bit of support? He can't be as bad as we all think he is, surely? Tebs will always be Tebs in my book. He'll always do quite well for 80% of the game but then tend to fall asleep or do something daft. Against Leeds he was a little unlucky since he had to do something since the striker would've scored anyway but it just looked so pathetic and weak. It's not as if he really powered it home like someone trying to put the ball 50 rows back should. It was almost meant to be glanced out for the corner and in that circumstance, I'm sure it was the wrong decision. Well, obviously now we look back!

Sub-standard replacements? Interesting thought and I'm sure everyone will have his or her say over just how capable our 3rd/4th choice defenders are. Personally I'm of the opinion that both Tebily and Taylor have what it takes to make it at this level. Maybe not together. I'd suggest that both players need a more experienced and steady centre-half next to them as well as a settled full-back on the side that they are playing. There's no way that either player should be anywhere near the first team if we should happen to go up. It's as simple as that.

Bruce has stated that he's not going to try and curb the attacking flair that has developed in the team. So we could be in for another action-packed afternoon. 3-2, 4-3, 9-7? Who knows? The only thing that I do know is that we're going to get a hold of someone and take them to pieces soon. Let's hope it happens today against Leicester City.

Aff - http://www.joysandsorrows.co.uk

CAN YOU REMEMBER

Not THAT first time, you dirty-minded swines; the first time at a football match, a real game, a Blues game, not a school fixture or a kickabout in the park.

Were you a child of the 60s, from the days of Gil Merrick and Stan Cullis, or the 70s, when Freddie Goodwin was seen on the pitch-side in his cardigan?

Is Gentleman Jim Smith the first manager you remember, or do you recall the rocky days of the late 80s – early 90s, when times were hard in division three (as was) and the Board sacked managers with depressing regularity? The dark times when the Kumars disappeared in the collapse of BCI and the club nearly fell apart?

Or do you first recollect the entertaining days of Barking Barry Fry and a revolving door at the players entrance? We weren't marvellous then, but it was entertaining to see who turned out for the team from week to week.

It's a good while since the first time I went to St Andrew's but if I shut my eyes, it's there as clear as yesterday; clearer maybe.

Getting off a 58 bus with my mates from school and joining the throng of people that meandered past the hotdog stalls just up the road from the Kingston Cinema (which was still in use then).

Smelling that slightly sweet, sickly aroma of onions, trying not to tread on cast-aside serviettes stained with ketchup.

Hearing the shouts of the souvenir sellers, surrounded by fluttering blue and white silky-nylon scarves that tended to be tied around a wrist rather than a neck.

Pushing our way forwards, four young girls squashed in amongst the heaving mass of people heading for their own particular footballing Mecca. Our turnstile money was pushed down our gloves for safekeeping, as it stopped Mum moaning about the dangers of getting your pocket picked.

Coats fastened up against the cold, we travelled light then. No WAP-enabled mobile phone, no digital camera, no miniature radio to keep up with the scores from the other games. This was the early 70s, and we yearned to get close enough the pitch for a good view of boy-wonder Trevor Francis.

Being jostled in the turnstile queue; people around us complaining that we'd miss the kick-off (some things never change, do they?), and finally forcing our way through into the ground, and through that dark tunnel on to the Kop.

The memory of that first sight of the pitch will never go away; it lay before us, vivid, brilliant green, decorated with daubs of mud in the goalmouths and around the centre circle.

And the noise, that sound that, if it could be bottled, could probably be sold as a cure for depression. If I think of it now, the hairs on the back of my neck still stand on end.

The unmistakeable hubbub of an expectant crowd, the rasp of rattles, that booming sound made by the lads at the back of the terraces hammering on the metal sheets. Sporadic chanting and singing, hurling abuse at the Leyton Orient fans squashed into the away end.

Sniffing the cold air; not being tall enough to see over the heads of most of the crowd, picking our way through the crush of people on the terraces to find a space in front of a crash barrier where we would be safe when (or if!) we scored a goal. Shoulder to shoulder with lads, hair skinhead-short, crombies, patchwork jumpers, Doc Martens. Old men wearing thick overcoats and flat caps.

YOUR FIRST TIME?

Little kids with home-made woolly Blues scarves tied around their necks to keep them warm, being passed over the heads of the crowd to places at the front where they stood some chance of being able to see the game.

Kick-off approached, and programme sellers milled around, along with the guys who strolled around the edge of the pitch with massive tea urns strapped to their backs; somehow I don't think the health and safety regulations would allow that today.

We looked across at the "posh" seats in the grandstand; who on earth would want to sit down to watch a football match?

The crowd noise reached a climax as the teams ran out on to the pitch, wearing the "penguin" strip that some fans love the best of all. Our heroes from the pictures on our bedroom walls were here in front of us; Trevor Francis, Bob and Dave Latchford, Bob Hatton, hardman Kenny Burns, Roger Hynd, Gordon Taylor (who was destined to turn into a plonker and be a spokesman for the PFA), Garry Pendrey. You could argue hard and long as to whether this team were better than the "best ever" team that got relegated at the end of last season.

The old clock ticked away the minutes of the game, and half-time scores were slotted into the spaces at the bottom, accompanied by cheers and boos, depending on the results.

Funnily enough, I can't remember that much about the match itself; memories don't necessarily work that way, but I can remember *being there*, the sights, the smells, the sounds, and in the end those are the important things.

I had to look up the result of this game on Soccerbase – we won, but we won a lot of games that season. It was one of our glory years, when under Freddie Goodwin we were promoted to Division One with fifty-six points and got as far as the semi-final of the FA Cup.

The league was a different thing then, and in the second tier of English football with us, were teams like Carlisle, Oxford United and Bristol City. Villa were below us in Division Three, and the League Championship that year was won by Derby County, led to success by the one and only Brian Clough.

There were no Russians, no Americans, no billionaires, and very few foreign players – unless you count Scotland and Ireland. Sky Sports was just a vision in the future, along with the Premier League, immense cash injections into the sport and the arrival of mass TV coverage.

The most high-tech information available at the time was buying the Sports Argus hot off the press when you got off the bus in town.

On TV, the results were read out in best BBC English on Grandstand and on the radio, and the ticker tape printed up the scores at the bottom of the telly screen, while Mum or Dad pored over their Littlewoods coupon and totted up the points.

If you were very lucky, you were occasionally allowed to stay up to watch Match of the Day.

It sounds like an age ago, but it's only half a lifetime, years of ups and downs of following this club.

Whatever else happened that November afternoon though, Cupid's fired a little arrow with "Birmingham City" on the end of it.

I fell in love that day.

Ms B is News and Features Editor for www.vbbfootball.com, Blues Blogger for BBC Birmingham, and from Monday 2- October, one of Phil Upton's football pundits on Radio WM!

TWO L's AND BACK

BY RUSSELL DEMPSEY

Leicester and Luton await. Actually, we're awaiting Leicester, but you know what I mean...

I see no reason, even following our defensively weak display, why we shouldn't be six points the richer, by the time Nigel Worthington's Norwich roll into town. There is a lot that could be said about Damien Johnson's dismissal. Fans I've spoken to who were at the game seem in mixed minds as to whether he deserved sending off. Some said his tackle was slightly late, but most seem to agree with what journalists said, that he appeared to have a heated chat with Brucey, and then lash out in temper straight after.

I don't think he deserves his captaincy now, but I'm not convinced he'll lose it. Though the pressure will definitely be on SB following the shirt-throwing apology as it doesn't seem to have calmed DJ down. How appropriate was the MIB image of Jonty in his pram?

Forssell's another player who has dominated the press recently. He's a cult figure at St. Andrew's, and I know for a fact it would cause a stir if we let him go to Watford/Munich in January. Similarly, though, I don't think many fans would agree if I suggested he should be guaranteed a starting place. He simply doesn't have the confidence. Milan Baros has been banging goals in like there's no tomorrow in Aston's reserves, so why is Mikael 'too good' for the first team? Some rumours suggest he's fallen out with Bruce, but I'd have thought a spell in reserves would have been MORE likely if that were true.....

Either way, whether he loves Bruce or hates him, I wish he'd start scoring. I think a spell in reserves should be seen as giving his confidence a shot in the arm, not as a punishment, or a sign he's crap. Dunny played in the reserves not too long ago, it's definitely the way to go if you ask for my opinion.

Tebs is a player who's once again come under the spotlight after his own goal, but I still feel he can do a job for us as cover. A pity we've been so short of defenders, though, as he's bordering on first choice. Injury and suspension should provide us with another changed line up this afternoon. I think Maik will keep his shirt, though he's going to have to stop a few shots or Bruce might judge he may as well let Doyle leak a few, for experience sake. Worth the risk, and he may rise to the challenge. Kelly's back, and I think Jaidi, Tebs, Painter, Larsson, Dunn, Nafti, McSheffrey, Campbell and Bendtner will be starting. At least we're beginning to look like we actually have a first choice eleven, suspensions and injuries aside.. DJ getting a three match suspension may even work out for the best, whatever happens when he returns. He's going to have to score a hat trick to convince some fans from now on though.

Marcos Painter has come in for a bit of stick, especially for his role in the Leeds penalty, but I think he should be given a chance, as he's only just come into the team, and has proven himself in the Premier. So he should be more than capable of bouncing back from that performance. The jury's out on Kelly, but he really will be desperate to prove we were right to snatch him from Spurs. Larsson should definitely be starting, even though I reckon that would be at Danns' expense. Nafti is beginning to show signs of why people were suggesting he'd be a better midfielder for us than **$avage.** Jaidi has gone against the grain in the media. We've been asking for attractive, attacking, football, and Bruce has seemingly gone all out for just that, but we've started leaking goals in the process, not helped by DJ and N'Gotty's sending's off, Kelly's, Jaidi's and Taylor's injuries or Tebs' own goal. I think Cameron Jerome would make a great strike partner for Forssell...in the reserves. He does seem to suffer the jitters in front of goal. Perhaps due to his price tag, something which DJC hasn't got to worry about. He's probably loving the fact that he's first choice for a team he'd be happy to sit on the bench for. Nice one Dudley!! Bendtner himself has actually forced his way to seventh in the Actim top 10 Championship players (4th best striker). Maik or all his critics, is third best keeper according to Actim and Bruno's second best defender. Not bad for a guy who got himself stupidly sent off!!

Discipline is going to come back to haunt us this season, you can almost guarantee it. Not only has it already cost us in suspensions and probably dropped points too, the FA may well investigate our indiscipline. Not least because we seem to be picking up more yellow cards this season, too. All part and parcel of being a 'young hungry squad' I guess, but it's going to have to be reined in, otherwise we'll be looking back at DJ's sending off if we don't make promotion. Even Dunny's already on 4 bookings! That said, Alex Bruce is already on 4 with the Tractor Boys, so perhaps it's as well he's not around.

Ever presents in the league this season so far:

Damien Johnson - a lot of media incorrectly said he'd been sent off twice this season, but he was substituted, which is a different 'reason' for throwing his toys out of the pram. Other than those 19 subbed minutes, DJ has been on the pitch for every league second thus far, Dunny has played 7 games from the start and 2 as sub. Larsson 5 starts, 4 as sub, Kilkenny is now the only squad member (other than Legzdins) not to have started a game yet (though he's been a sub on three occasions)

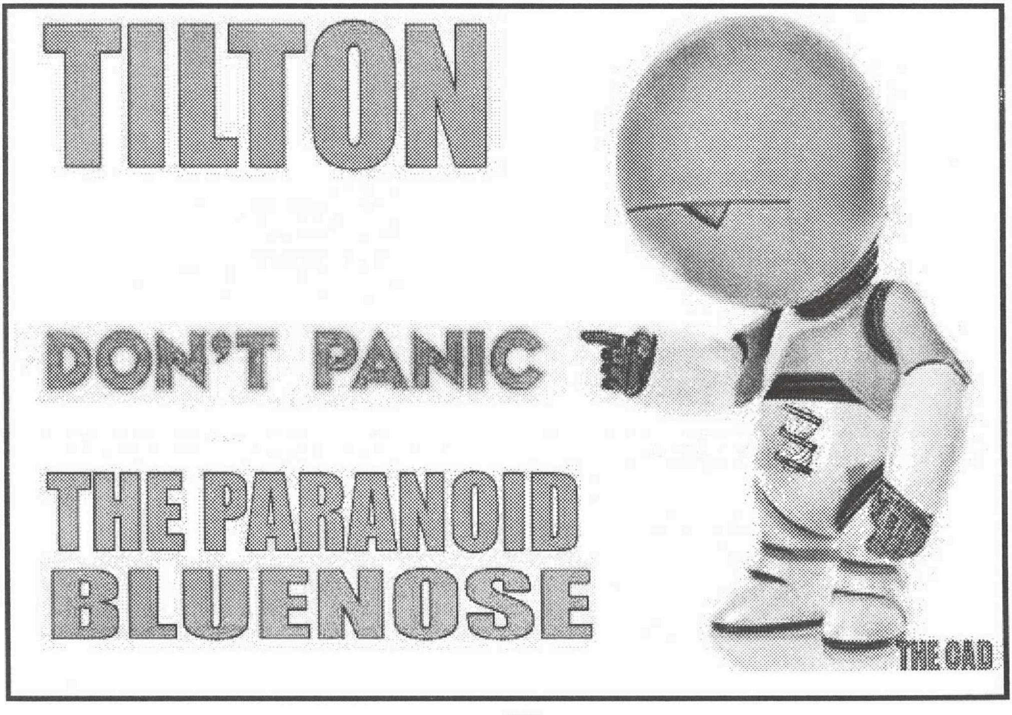
We'll need a new captain for the next three games, and even if DJ's due to retain the captaincy, my vote would be for Dunny. Seemingly capable of staying the distance, his motivation, leadership skills and passion cannot be argued with. His four bookings show commitment, without stretching to a red card (famous last words!). If we play three blinders with Dunny as Captain, hopefully DJ would find it hard to get back into the team, and Bruce will have no option but to give someone else the captaincy. I think at best DJ should be cover for right back or centre mid (sixth choice behind, Muamba, Clemence, Dunn, Nafti, Danns). I did rate DJ last season, but he seems too much of a liability now, and I can't imagine many fans will be happy to see him back as captain.

Talking about players coming back, we really don't see too much of Julian Gray or Stephen Clemence. Not easy when you've got the likes of McSheffrey and Nafti in front of you on the pick list.

'Interesting' statistic - Birmingham have beaten Leicester 48 times in league games. Leicester have beaten us in 48 league games too. Seems this is a 'winner takes all' encounter, and I'd find it hard to bet against us. 2-0 the blues of B9.

Keep Right On!

Gabbie Trivia Question - Answer: Denis Law & Ian Botham



SQUAD PAGE

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BLUES

1	Maik Taylor
2	Stephen Kelly
3	Mathew Sadler
4	Martin Taylor
5	Mathew Upson
6	Stephen Clemence
7	Sebastian Larson
8	David Dunn
9	Mikael Forssell
10	Cameron Jerome
11	Julian Gray
12	Mehdi Nafti
13	Colin Doyle
14	D J Campbell
15	Neil Kilkenny
16	Olivier Tebily
17	Neil Danns
18	Samuel Oji
20	Marcos Painter
21	Bruno N`Gotty
22	Damien Johnson
23	Mathew Birley
24	Radhi Jaidi
25	Alex Bruce
26	Fabrice Muamba
27	Nicklas Bendtner
28	Garry McSheffrey
29	Adam Legzdins

Leicester City

Goalkeeper
Conrad Logan
Robert Douglas
Paul Henderson
Defender
Darren Kenton
Gareth McAuley
Scott Lycett
Jay Smedley
Alan Maybury
Patrick Kisnorbo
Patrick McCarthy
Nils-Eric Johansson
Richard Stearman
Midfielder
Andy Johnson
Josh Low
Louis Dodds
Levi Porter
Stephen Hughes
Gareth Williams
Mohammed Sylla
Danny Tiatto
Attacking Midfielder
Ashley Chambers
James Wesolowski
Striker
Iain Hume
Chris O`Grady
Max Gradel
Matt Fryatt
Elvis Hammond

BIRMINGHAM CITY LADIES

NEXT HOME MATCH

Sunday 15th Oct vs Charlton LFC 2pm kickoff League Cup

Ground Details: Redditch United FC From Redditch Town Centre.

On town centre ring road take Access 7, then follow the road round to the left and turn right into Church Road, then right again passing the church on the left and the railway station on the right.

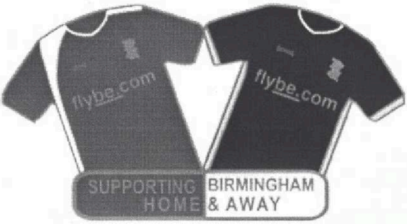
Go straight on through the traffic lights. The ground entrance is 400 yards on the right on the brow of the hill (look for the Hill View Surgery at the top of the drive of the club).

BADGES

NEW BADGES ALWAYS AVAILABLE ON MIB BADGE BOARDS

Another new season, and loads of new badges for all you Bluenoses to purchase. This season I am trying to bring out a new badge for every weekend home match. There will be great new Blues designs & new England badges as well. Prices are being pegged again so each badge will cost £2.00, or you can purchase 3 for a fiver.

So, keep your Bluenose eyes peeled for new badges on sale from your friendly MIB sellers.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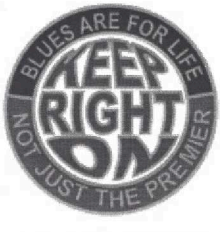
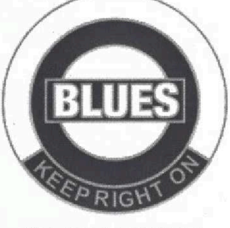
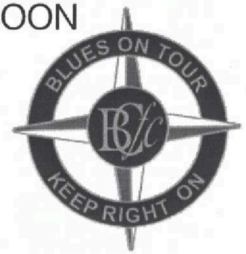

BLUES ARE FOR LIFE
KEEP RIGHT ON
NOT JUST THE PREMIER

OUT SOON


BLUES
KEEP RIGHT ON

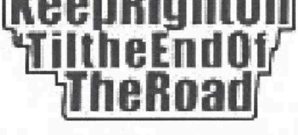
OUT SOON


BLUES ON TOUR
BCFC
KEEP RIGHT ON

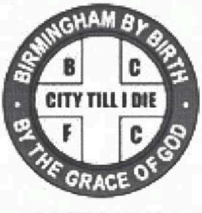
OUT SOON

£2.00 EACH

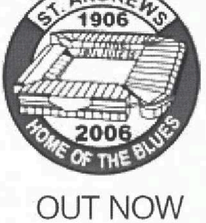
3 FOR A FIVER


KeepRightOn
TiltheEndOf
TheRoad

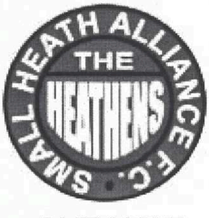
OUT NOW


BIRMINGHAM BY BIRTH
B C
CITY TILL I DIE
F C
BY THE GRACE OF GOD

OUT NOW


ST. ANDREWS
1906
2006
HOME OF THE BLUES

OUT NOW


SMALL HEATH ALLIANCE F.C.
THE
HEATHENS

OUT NOW

ALL BADGES IN LOTS OF COLOUR WAYS